

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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SS-15 COME-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 6301

DEPT. PASS TO AID FOR NE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, AF, US
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH MINISTER OF WATER AND POWER, PROFESSOR
MOHAMMAD MANSOOR HASHIMI

1. ON 1 AUGUST, ACCOMPANIED BY THE USAID DIRECTOR, I PAID MY
INITIAL CALL ON THE MINISTER OF WATER AND POWER, PROFESSOR
MOHAMMAD MANSOOR HASHIMI. AFTER OPENING PLEASANTRIES, I TOLD
THE MINISTER OF THE RECENT MEETINGS UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
NEWSOM AND I HAD WITH PRESIDENT TARA K. I SAID THAT THE
MEETINGS HAD BEEN VERY CORDIAL AND THAT BOTH OF OUR GOVERNMENTS
WERE DESIROUS OF ESTABLISHING FRIENDLY RELATIONS ON THE BASIS
OF MUTUAL INTEREST AND BENEFIT. I ALSO SAID THAT WE WISHED TO
HELP THE DRA IN ITS EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE WELL-BEING OF ITS
RURAL POOR.

2. THE MINISTER EXPLAINED HIS PLANS FOR DEVELOPING THE WATER
RESOURCES OF AFGHANISTAN TO EXPAND IRRIGATION AND HYDROELECTRIC
POWER. HE SAID HE WOULD WELCOME AID INVOLVEMENT IN THE DEVELOP-
MENT OF WATER RESOURCES IN THE SOUTHERN AREA OF AFGHANISTAN,
SPECIFICALLY SUGGESTING THE NEED FOR FURTHER DAMS ON THE
FARAH RUD AND ARGHANDAB, AND HELPING TO EXTEND THE ELECTRICITY
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GRID FROM KAJAKAI TO HERAT. WE RESPONDED BY DISCUSSING
CURRENT AID GUIDELINES AND POLICIES, NOTING THAT AID PROJECTS
HAD TO FOCUS DIRECTLY ON ASSISTING THE RURAL POOR, AND SUGGEST-
ING THAT THE IF'S, TO WHICH WE WERE THE MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR,
WERE MORE APPROPRIATE FOR SUCH INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS AS DAMS
AND NATIONAL ELECTRICITY GRIDS. WE NOTED THAT WE WERE
CURRENTLY WORKING IN THE HELMAND VALLEY WITH AID TO INCREASE

FARM PRODUCTION THROUGH IMPROVED DRAINAGE, AND WOULD BE WILLING TO CONSIDER OTHER MEASURES WHICH WOULD DIRECTLY IMPACT ON THE RURAL POOR. WE DISCUSSED RURAL ELECTRIFICATION AS ONE POSSIBILITY, POINTING OUT OUR INCONCLUSIVE DISCUSSIONS ON THIS SUBJECT WITH THE PREVIOUS REGIME.

3. WE ASKED THE MINISTER THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RECENT DRA DECISION TO MOVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HAVA FROM THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE BACK TO THE MINISTRY OF WATER AND POWER. THE MINISTER SAID THAT AS LONG AS HAVA WAS EXTENSIVELY INVOLVED IN DRAIN CONSTRUCTION, THE DRA HAD DETERMINED IT WAS MOST LOGICAL TO KEEP HAVA UNDER THE MINISTRY OF WATER AND POWER. HAVA'S RESPONSIBILITIES, HOWEVER, WERE TO BE MORE NARROWLY LIMITED TO THE IRRIGATION/DRAINAGE INFRASTRUCTURE AND TO AGRICULTURE; RESPONSIBILITY FOR HEALTH AND EDUCATION WERE TO BE RETURNED TO THEIR RESPECTIVE MINISTRIES. HE SAID THAT WHEN CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES WERE COMPLETED, HAVA WOULD BE PLACED UNDER THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE. WE ASKED HIM WITH WHOM IN HIS MINISTRY AID SHOULD COORDINATE CENTRAL HELMAND DRAINAGE PROJECT ACTIVITIES; THE MINISTER SAID WE SHOULD WORK DIRECTLY WITH THE PRESIDENT FOR PLANNING, MR. NASIIM AZIMI.

4. WE NEXT ASKED THE MINISTER WHAT MEASURES WERE BEING TAKEN TO ASSURE ADEQUATE EQUIPMENT AVAILABILITY TO HCC ON THE HELMAND PROJECT, PENDING THE ARRIVAL OF AID EQUIPMENT
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UNDER THE PROJECT. THE MINISTER SAID THAT HE HAD MADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR HCC TO PROVIDE THE HELMAND PROJECT WITH REQUIRED EQUIPMENT, DRAWING THIS PRIMARILY FROM AN HCC PROJECT TERMINATING IN THE PULI KHUMRI AREA. WE CALLED HIS ATTENTION TO THE CONTINUING PROBLEM WE HAD HAD IN GETTING ON-FARM DRAINS CONSTRUCTED BY HAND LABOR, AND SAID THAT WE WERE UNDERTAKING A JOINT STUDY OF THIS PROBLEM WITH HAVA AND HCC IN THE NEAR FUTURE. I NOTED THAT HCC HAD JUST MADE A MAJOR COMMERCIAL EQUIPMENT PURCHASE (FROM RUSSIA) AND POINTED OUT U.S. COMPETITIVENESS IN THIS AREA--SAYING THAT I HOPED IN THE FUTURE, HE WOULD LOOK TO THE U.S. AS A POSSIBLE SOURCE FOR SUCH COMMERCIAL PURCHASES. THE MINISTER NODDED, BUT MADE NO COMMENT.

5. THE MINISTER ASKED IF WE WOULD PROVIDE SOME TECHNICAL EXPERTS TO HCC. WE SAID WE WOULD CONSIDER ANY REQUEST, BUT THAT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO DO THIS OUTSIDE OF A SPECIFIC PROJECT CONTEXT. WE NOTED THAT WE HAD JOINTLY ASSESSED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NEEDS OF HCC UNDER THE EXISTING HELMAND PROJECT AND WERE CURRENTLY PROVIDING ONE EQUIPMENT SPECIALIST.

6. THE MINISTER SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN AUTHORIZED BY THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING TO SIGN THE AMENDMENT TO THE CENTRAL HELMAND DRAINAGE PROJECT, AND SUGGESTED WE FIX THE DATE FOR 3 AUGUST; WE AGREED . FYI: THE AMENDMENT TO CHD II OBLIGATING \$3.151 MILLION WAS SIGNED 3 AUGUST. SEE SEPTTEL. END FYI.

7. COMMENT: THE MEETING WAS CORDIAL AND FRIENDLY THROUGHOUT. HOWEVER, DESPITE OUR CAREFUL EXPLANATION OF THE AID MANDATE AND THE IMPLICATIONS THIS HELD FOR HEAVY INFRA-STRUCTURE PROJECTS, SUCH AS DAMS, THE MINISTER DID NOT APPEAR TO GRASP FULLY ITS SIGNIFICANCE. END COMMENT.
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